

DATE: 10/08/2011

Powers, 27-Mission Veteran, Begins Fateful Flight

By DAVID WISE and THOMAS R. ROSS

He was thirty years old and he had flown more than 600 hours in the U-2. He had completed 27 missions in it since reporting to the Middle East four years before. Each had been a grueling and lonely ride along the edges of space. But the worst ride for any U-2 pilot was the silent flight over the Soviet Union.

Francis Gary Powers was flying there that day for the Central Intelligence Agency.

On his hip was a noiseless 22-caliber semiautomatic pistol.

In his logbook were the notations: 1 May 1960. Gertie Number 4154. Takeoff 0128 GMT (8:28 a.m. local time). Delayed one-half hour.

This is the first of 14 articles condensed from the book, **THE U-2 AFFAIR**, which tells the story behind the most explosive espionage case of the 20th century. © Copyright 1962, by David Wise and Thomas B. Fors. Published in New York by Random House, Inc.

Headed For Russia's "Canaveral"

On his map, a red and blue line traced a 8,783-mile flight from Peshawar, Pakistan, to Bodo, Norway. It would take him 2441 miles over the Soviet Union, past Stalinabad, Ararat, Chelyabinsk, Sverdlovsk, Kirov, Archangel, and Murmansk.

The plane was headed straight for Tyura Tam, the Soviet base. Caravel, eighty miles to the east of the Aral Sea. The Tyura Tam and Kapustin Yar, another test center southeast of Stalingrad, were the only intercontinental ballistic missile sites that American intelligence had located in the Soviet Union.

But on April 9, a U-2 had spotted traces of disturbing digging along the route Powers was to follow that day. Local agents had electronic eavesdropping deepened suspicions that the Soviets were building their first operational ICBM base.

The primary purpose of the May 1 flight was to photograph the terrain so the Russians could camouflage the air base. The air thick for which blankets the ground was cast by the Union in the summer months.

1177. Albinus erectus. He was carrying a
report on the cover with a 77.04 millimeter lens
and a 77.04 millimeter lens in the body of the